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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT : Estimates of Enemy Order of Battle in
Indochina

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File

As you know, during earlier periods of the war there were some significant differences between our (OER) estimates of VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam and those of MACV and DIA.

Beginning in mid 1968 and increasingly we were able to establish a reasonably good working relationship with DIA on this matter and have been able to provide the Washington community with DIA/CIA agreed estimates. This process has required a fair amount of vigilance on our part and we still have minor problems from time to time but these have been largely copable.

Washington estimates for current OB have never been closer to MACV's than they now are. MACV's current single figure estimate of the VC/NVA Regular Combat, Administrative Services and Guerrillas is now encompassed by our ranged estimate of these forces. This has come about for two reasons. Largely as a result of proding from Washington -- DIA played a helpful role in this -- MACV dropped its earlier methodology for Administrative Service troops and come up

Army and DIA review(s) completed.

an estimate nearly identical to ours. MACV's estimate increased from 33,000 in early 1968 to a current figure of 86,400. Secondly, our OB estimate series has reflected the considerable changes that enemy force levels have undergone, whereas MACV's has remained more static. As a result, our differences were greatest during 1968 when enemy forces were at relatively high levels, but now that enemy forces have been significantly eroded our estimates are much closer to MACV's.

CIA and MACV
Comparative Estimates (in thousands)

| | <u>CIA</u> | | <u>MACV</u> | |
|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | <u>Dec. 1968</u> | <u>Nov. 1970</u> | <u>Dec. 1968</u> | <u>Oct. 1970</u> |
| Regular Combat | 170-190 | 110-125 | 148 | 112 |
| Admin. Service | 80-100 | 70- 90 | 53 | 86 |
| Guerrillas | <u>80-100</u> | <u>50- 70</u> | <u>56</u> | <u>37</u> |
| Total | 330-390 | 230-285 | 257 | 235 |

The December 1968 estimates for Regular Combat forces and Administrative Services are agreed DIA/CIA figures, the

November 1970 estimates for these two elements have been

agreed to by our analysts and may be considered as agreed

DIA has not agreed
to our Guerrilla estimates and has continued to use ranges based on the MACV figures. The difference in current

Guerrilla figures is mitigated somewhat by the fact that our estimate includes some 10,000 "Secret" Guerrillas that MACV excludes.

Our total shows an erosion of about 100,000 since Dec. 1968, whereas MACV's total shows a net reduction of 22,000.

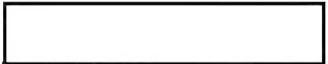
VC/NVA Forces in Cambodia (Enemy forces in Cambodia are included in the above estimates for South Vietnam) There are no significant differences between the agreed DIA/CIA estimates for these forces and the MACV estimate. However, MACV's expression of its estimate is misleading and reflects the ^{parochial} ~~paradoxical~~ view of Saigon.

MACV has removed 6,000 men from its Regular Combat ^{for South Vietnam} OB ~~on~~ the grounds that these troops deep in Cambodia no longer pose a threat to South Vietnam. MACV estimates 50,000 in Cambodia but "targeted against South Vietnam."

Our estimate of enemy troops in Cambodia is 50,000-60,000 and we make no arbitrary cut as to mission. Many of the 50,000 MACV carries "targeted against South Vietnam" are deep in Cambodia in combat and performing security and support missions that are vital to their forces in Cambodia and South Vietnam.

Enemy Forces in Laos. We have no differences in estimates of enemy forces in Laos. MACV's current estimate

of NVA/Pathet Lao is 127,000. We are currently updating our last estimate of these forces to reflect changes that have recently occurred. Our analysts expect to come up with a figure close to MACV's.


Director Economic Research

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FROM DIAAP-4 DIA

SUBJ: SEA ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE CONFERENCE (U)

1. (C) DIA WILL HOST VC/NVA ORDER OF BATTLE CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON DURING THE PERIOD 9-13 NOVEMBER 1970. CIA, DIA, NSA, CINCPAC, MACV, USARPAC AND DAO PHNOM PENH ARE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE PRINCIPAL CONFEREES. OSD/SYSTEMS ANALYSIS, OSD/COMPTROLLER AND THE SERVICES ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVERS.

2. (C) PURPOSE OF CONFERENCE: PROVIDE GROUP DISCUSSION OF ENEMY OB (PREMARILY IN RVN AND CAMBODIA), RECONCILE POSITIONS ON ENEMY STRENGTHS AND DEFINE UNRESOLVED PROBLEM AREAS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS. THE DISCUSSIONS SHOULD PROMOTE INCREASED ANALYST-LEVEL EXCHANGE IN SUBSEQUENT DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS, AS WELL AS SURFACE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.

3. (C) THE TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE CONFERENCE FOLLOWS:

| AGENDA NUMBER | DATE | TOPICS |
|---------------|--------|--|
| 1-6 | 9 NOV | OPENING REMARKS, DOD OB ENVIRONMENT, COLLATERAL REPORTING, DEFINITIONS, 554TH TRANSPORTATION GROUP, GUERRILLAS |
| 7 | 10 NOV | ADMIN SERVICES |
| 8 | 11 NOV | REGULAR COMBAT FORCES |
| 9-11 | 12 NOV | STRENGTH ESTIMATE TO INCLUDE CAMBODIA, RECRUITMENT, GAINS/LOSSES |
| 12-14 | 13 NOV | RETRO OB ESTIMATES, CAMBODIA OB, REPORT OF CONFERENCE |

4. (C) CONFEREES ARE URGED TO PREPARE POSITION PAPERS ON AGENDA TOPICS. ADVANCE SUBMISSION OF THE POSITION PAPERS TO DIA, ATTENTION

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AP-442. IS ENCOURAGED. 5/6 NOV ARRIVAL OF CINCPAC AND MACV REPRESENTATIVES IS REQUESTED FOR PREPARATORY PLANNING AND COORDINATION.

5. (C)-REQUEST LIST OF CONFEREES TO INCLUDE SECURITY CLEARANCES, PRIMARY AREAS OF INTEREST, AND ARRIVAL TIMES BE SUBMITTED TO DIA BY 28 OCTOBER. BILLETING ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE HANDLED BY DIA UPON REQUEST.

VVP

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